



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 151

WASHINGTON, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

No. 117

Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, our Lord, sustainer of all life. This week, as we remember the ratification of our Constitution, remind us that without You we are powerless. Sometimes we feel like collapsing beneath the challenges. When we try to face temptations alone, we too often are defeated. When we seek to meet sorrow without Your presence, our wounds remain unhealed. We are too often fascinated by evil and bored by goodness.

Without You, Lord, we not only cannot know what is right but have no power to do it. Empower the Members of this body today with the blessings of Your presence. Be with each of them to help, to guide, to comfort, and to sustain; grant that whatever light may shine or shadow fall, they may walk in Your wisdom. Keep us all in Your will until we reach our journey's end.

We pray in the Name of our Lord. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The PRESIDENT pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we will open with a period for morning

business for 60 minutes. Following that time, the Senate will resume consideration of the Agriculture appropriations bill which we began last Thursday. While we have no votes today, I encourage Members who intend to offer amendments to notify the bill managers and begin offering their amendments this afternoon. We will stack votes for Tuesday morning and hope to finish this bill early this week.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1715 AND S. 1716

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1715) to provide relief for students and institutions affected by Hurricane Katrina, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 1716) to provide emergency health care relief for survivors of Hurricane Katrina, and for other purposes.

Mr. FRIST. In order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceeding en bloc.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bills will be placed on the calendar.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 3 p.m. with time equally divided.

The Senator from Massachusetts is recognized.

HURRICANE KATRINA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I thank the majority leader for taking the parliamentary steps that are going to permit us to consider some emergency help and assistance for New Orleans and the gulf area, in the area of education in particular. We are going to have more to say about that in a very short period of time. We want our friends there to know help really is on the way, particularly in the areas of education and health.

On Friday, 13 of my colleagues and I visited the stricken city of New Orleans and the gulf coast to see Katrina's devastation firsthand and hear from the affected residents. Like so many millions of Americans, I have been moved by the news coverage of Katrina and her brutal aftermath for the past 3 weeks. But nothing I have seen on television, nothing I have read in the newspapers, and nothing I have heard from the survivors we have embraced in Massachusetts could prepare me for the staggering scope of the devastation when witnessed firsthand.

The destruction is massive in its scope. In many areas, the destruction is total. Much of New Orleans is a ghost town. Troops and police patrol eerily quiet streets. The desolation is frighteningly real.

At least 40 percent of New Orleans was devastated by the calamity. We could see the high water marks on buildings, far above our heads. Debris is strewn everywhere. Massive amounts of muck, black as ink and ringed with the rainbow swirls of oil and chemicals, cover everything.

For so many of our fellow citizens—from New Orleans and throughout the gulf region—there is nothing to return to. In Mississippi, entire communities are completely gone. All that is left of entire blocks is the concrete slabs where families once lived. Even the old oaks that graced Mississippi's historic shoreline for generations could not withstand Katrina's wrath.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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